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NO. 40
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THE VAULT OF



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HORROR[®]

*Jack
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FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

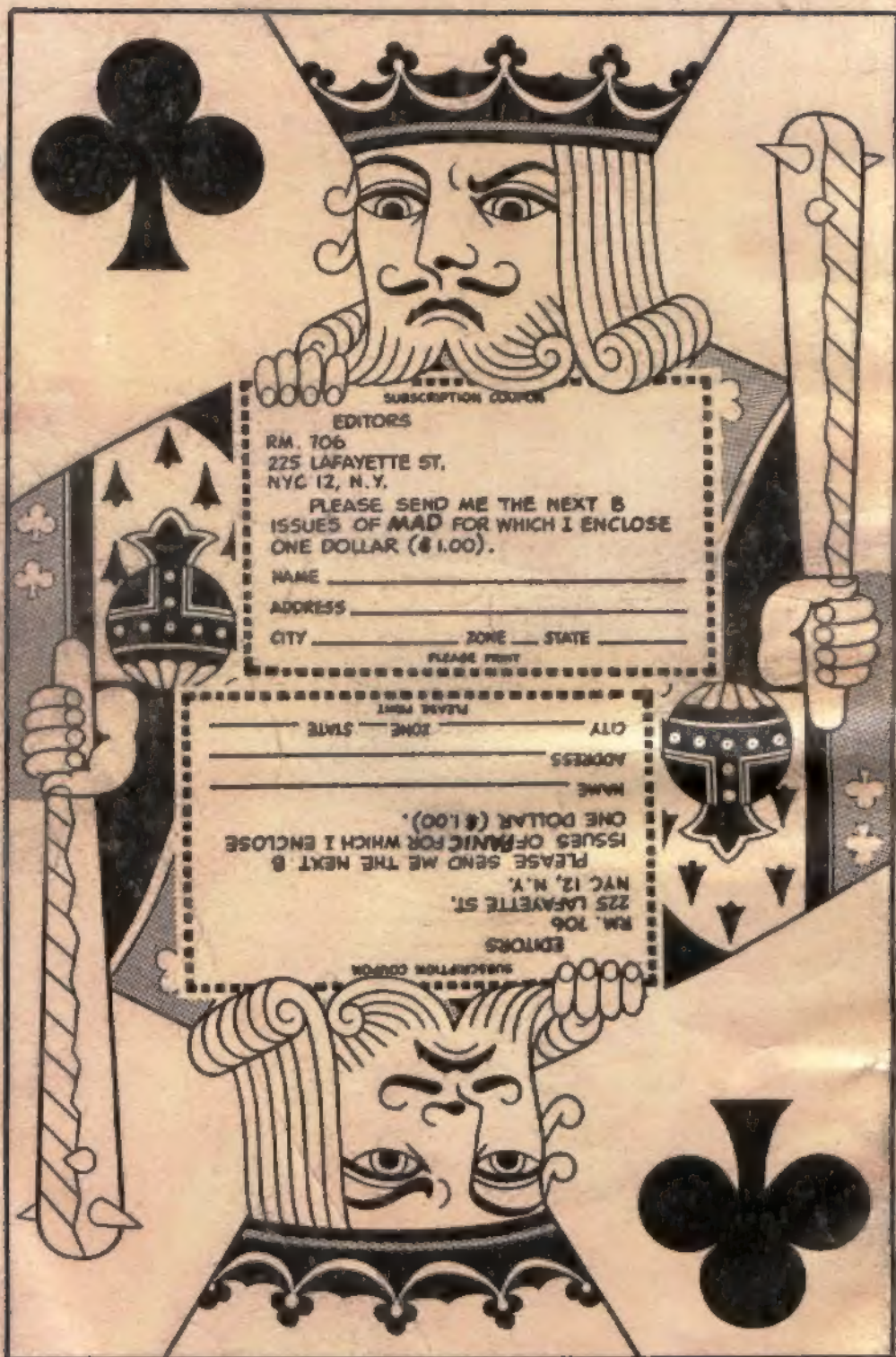


THE CRYPT-KEEPER



JOHN
CRAIG

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THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! WELL, HERE WE ARE, ALL SET TO GO AGAIN! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER USHERING YOU INTO THIS PARADISE OF PERIL, THIS INN OF INIQUITY, THIS DEN OF DEVIL-WORSHIP... IN SHORT, THE VAULT OF HORROR! YOU KNOW BY NOW, TO COME PREPARED, DON'T YOU? DRUSILLA, MY HELP-MATE, HAS BEEN WAITING BREATHLESSLY FOR YOU, SO CURL UP IN A COZY ROT-UPHOLSTERED CASKET, PUSH ASIDE THE MAGGOTY BONES, THE CHUNKS OF DECAYED FLESH AND RELAX! TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND GET SET FOR THE CHILL-PRODUCING TALE CALLED...

OLD MAN MOSE!



Old Rogers reined
his horse and
brought the wagon to
an abrupt halt. He
looked up at...

NED ROGERS REINED IN HIS HORSE AND BROUGHT THE WAGON TO AN ABRUPT HALT. HE GAZED UP AT THE GOLDEN HILLSIDE, AT THE FIGURES HE SAW. THERE WERE SEVERAL BOYS TAUNTING AND STONING WHAT SEEMED TO BE A COWERING OLD MAN WHO PLEADED TO BE LEFT ALONE...

HEY! HEY, UP THERE! LEAVE HIM ALONE!



NED LEAPED TO THE GROUND, HURRIED UP TO THE GROUP WHO NOW STOOD ALMOST COMPLETELY ENCIRCLING THE WHIMPERING, FRIGHTENED OLD MAN...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT'S HE DONE?

HE'S **WICKED!** HE LIVES IN THE **BLACK CHURCH!**

YEAH! MY PAW SAYS HE PRAYS TO THE DEVIL IN THERE! HE'S **BAD!** MY PAW SAYS SO!



STUFF AN' NONSENSE! IF HE AIN'T HURT YOU NONE, YOU GOT NO RIGHT TO THROW STONES AT HIM! NOW YOU GO ON HOME! GO ON...**GIT!**



THE BOYS HELD BACK. NED ROGERS TURNED TO THE HUNCHED, LITTLE MAN WHO STILL TREMBLED...

COME ON, OLD TIMER! IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW... THEY WON'T HURT YOU ANY MORE!

THANK YOU! THEY... THEY ALWAYS PICK ON ME!



THE BOYS TURNED AND SPED AWAY IN THE DIRECTION OF TOWN...

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT YOU PRAYIN' TO THE **DEVIL?**

IT AIN'T **TRUE**, MISTER! I **LIVE** IN THE **BLACK CHURCH**, SURE... BUT ONLY 'CAUSE **NOBODY'LL** LET ME LIVE ANY-PLACE **ELSE!**



NED STUDIED THE MAN. HE NOTICED HIS OBVIOUS UGLINESS, HIS DIRTY, RAGGED CLOTHES, HIS GRIMY, SUNKEN CHEEKS... AND HE SAW THE PAINFUL LONLINESS IN THE WIDE, TEAR BRIMMED EYES...

I AIN'T **MEAN** AND **WICKED!** I DON'T PRAY TO THE DEVIL! IT'S JUST THAT I'M ALL ALONE, AN' NOBODY LIKES ME JUST 'CAUSE I AIN'T NICE TO LOOK AT! I CAN'T HELP IT! I **GOTTA** LIVE IN THE **BLACK CHURCH!** IT'S THE ONLY PLACE I GOT!

I UNDERSTAND, OLD TIMER! 'MON. YOU COME ALONG WITH **ME!** I CAN GIVE YOU A PLACE TO STAY!



THEY CLIMBED ATOP THE WAGON AND A SHORT WHILE LATER THEY CAME TO A STOP BEFORE NED'S HOME. HIS LOVELY WIFE CAME HAPPILY OUT TO MEET THEM...

BELLE, THIS IS MOSE! HE'S HAD A SPELL OF HARD LUCK AND SINCE WE NEED A HANDYMAN AROUND, I FIGURED WE COULD TAKE HIM ON, HELP HIM OUT!

OF COURSE, NED! HELLO, MOSE! I HOPE YOU'LL BE HAPPY WITH US! COME INSIDE... FOOD'S READY!



OLD MOSE SLIPPED INTO THE ROGERS' WAY OF LIFE AS IF HE WERE ONE OF THE FAMILY. HE WORKED HARD, IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, TO SHOW HIS GRATITUDE... AND SOMETIMES...

YES, MOSE? WHAT IS IT?

MRS... MRS. ROGERS... THIS IS FOR YOU. I... I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE IT!



FLOWERS! FOR ME? WHY, MOSE... THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL!

YOU... YOU AND MR. ROGERS HAVE BEEN SO GOOD TO ME AND ALL... I MEAN... I NEVER BEEN TREATED NICE BY ANYONE BEFORE! YOU MAKE ME FEEL SO GOOD INSIDE...



WHY, MOSE! HOW SWEET OF YOU!

IT'S THE TRUTH! I FEEL LIKE I BEEN REBORN! LIKE SEEIN' THE SUN AFTER A HEAVY RAIN! I'M SO HAPPY...



YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, NOT HAVIN' ANYONE... NOT EVEN AN ENEMY TO TALK TO! IT'S AWFUL... JUST PLAIN AWFUL! SO MANY TIMES I WISHED I'D DIE, 'CAUSE I FELT SO DOWNRIGHT MISERABLE!



...BUT YOU AND MR. ROGERS CHANGED ALL THAT... AN' I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU BOTH! I LOVE YOU LIKE YOU WERE MY OWN FLESH AN' BLOOD!

THANK YOU, MOSE. I THINK THAT'S THE NICEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD!



OLD MOSE LOWERED HIS HEAD. HE BRUSHED A GRIMY PAW GRUFFLY ACROSS HIS FACE TO WIPE THE TEARS... THEN HE TURNED AND WALKED OFF TO FINISH HIS CHORES...

HE'S SUCH A NICE OLD MAN...

YES... A NICE OLD MAN.



SEVERAL WEEKS LATER IT WAS NECESSARY FOR NED TO GO TO TOWN. JUST BEFORE STARTING HOMEWARD AGAIN, HE ENTERED THE GENERAL STORE TO BUY SUPPLIES. A BUSY MURMURING BEGAN AS HE STRODE TO THE COUNTER...

YES, SIR? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

MY NAME IS ROGERS... NED ROGERS. I'M NEW AROUND THESE PARTS. JUST GOT ME A PLACE UP THE MOUNTAIN. IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE YOU TO FILL THIS ORDER!



THE CLERK SET ABOUT FILLING THE ORDER AS NED STOOD WAITING, FEELING VAGUELY UNCOMFORTABLE, KNOWING HE WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE WHISPERS. SUDDENLY, SOMEONE STEPPED UP BEHIND HIM, TAPPED HIS SHOULDER...

OH! HOWDY!
MY NAME'S
ROGERS...

I'M JIM HANNIBAL. ME AN' THE BOYS
WERE JUST TALKING. SEEN' AS HOW
YOU'RE NEW 'ROUND HERE, WE THOUGHT
YOU OUGHT TO BE **TOLD** ABOUT OLD
MOSE!



ABOUT MOSE?
TELL ME **WHAT?**

WELL, WE HEAR TELL YOU GOT HIM
'ROUND YOUR PLACE, WORKIN'! HE'S
A **BAD ONE**, ROGERS! YOU OUGHTA BE
CAREFUL! WHY, HE TALKS TO THE
DEVIL, EVEN!



OH, THAT! WHY,
I THOUGHT THAT
WAS JUST A LOT
OF BOY'S TALK!
ALL ABOUT A
BLACK
CHURCH!

THAT'S **RIGHT!**
YEARS AGO, PEOPLE
USED TO WORSHIP
IN THAT PLACE!
THEY CALLED ON
THE DEVIL... THEY
EVEN **SACRIFICED**
PEOPLE!



NOW, I AIN'T JUST SPOUTIN' TO
HEAR MYSELF! OLD MOSE'S GREAT
GRANDDAD WAS ONE OF THE BIG
LEADERS OF THAT PLACE! WHY,
THEY HAD ALL SORTS OF **EVILS!**
YOU ASK **ANYONE!**

THAT'S SO,
ROGERS!



BY JIMMINY, ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS
LOOK AT OLD MOSE AN' YOU CAN
SEE **EVIL** WRITTEN ALL OVER HIM!
WHY, WE ALMOST STRUNG HIM UP
ONCE, BUT THE LAW STEPPED IN,
BROKE IT UP!



WELL, I APPRECIATE
YOUR KINDNESS IN
TELLING ME ALL
THIS, BUT MOSE HAS
BEEN JUST FINE
ABOUT EVERYTHING.
I'LL JUDGE HIM ON
HOW HE ACTS WITH
ME!

SURE, MOSE IS QUIET! TOWNS-
FOLK WOULDN'T LET HIM COME
NEAR, THAT'S WHY THERE AIN'T
BEEN NO TROUBLE LATELY! BUT
YOU BE **CAREFUL**, MR. ROGERS!
ONE O' THESE DAYS HE'S LIABE
TO **BUST LOOSE!**



AS HE STARTED HOMEWARD, ANGER SMOULDERED IN
NED'S HEART AT THE SUPERSTITIOUS TOWNSPEOPLE WHO
HAD SO UNJUSTLY WRONGED OLD MOSE!

SUCH NONSENSE! JUST
'CAUSE HIS GREAT GRAND-
DAD... **PSHAW!** BETTER
GET HOME! LOOKS
LIKE RAIN!



THE DOWNPOUR HAD BEGUN WHEN NED FINALLY REACHED HOME...



NED! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WE EXPECTED YOU LONG AGO!

ANYTHING WRONG, MR. ROGERS?

SORRY I'M LATE! I WAS TRYING TO BEAT THE RAIN, BUT I HIT A RUT THAT JOLTED MY RIFLE OFF THE WAGON! IT MUST HAVE STRUCK A ROCK...THE STOCK'S SPLIT! HAVE TO GET A NEW ONE!



...SURE IS A SHAME! A MAN NEEDS HIS RIFLE IN THESE PARTS!

WELL, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT NOW, DEAR! COME ON...SUPPER'S READY!

THAT NIGHT IN BED, NED TOSSED AND TURNED RESTLESSLY, HIS MIND FILLED WITH THE THINGS THE TOWNS-FOLK SAID...

BLAST IT! ALL THOSE WORDS KEEP ON AGITATING...KEEPING ME AWAKE! I KNOW MOSE ISN'T WICKED! STILL, HE MIGHT HAVE A GRUDGE AGAINST EVERY-BODY...



PSHAW! WHAT AM I THINKING! ALL CRAZY THOUGHTS! MOSE IS...WHAT'S THAT?!

A NOISE! SOMEONE'S FOOLIN' WITH THE BACK DOOR!



HURRIEDLY, HE ROSE AND DONNED HIS ROBE. STEALTHILY HE PEEPED OVER THE BANNISTER...SOMEONE WAS THERE!

IT'S MOSE! DAG BLAST IT! WHAT'S HE BEEN DOING OUT THIS TIME O' NIGHT?



MOSE! WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

WHA...? OH...MR. ROGERS! YOU... YOU SURPRISED ME! I...I DIDN'T MEAN TO WAKE YOU. I'M SORRY. I...I WAS JUST OUT...FOR A WALK! YES! JUST A WALK!



I'M...I'M REALLY SORRY IF I DISTURBED YOU, MR. ROGERS! I DIDN'T MEAN TO! WELL... WELL, I'LL GO TO BED NOW! GOOD NIGHT, MR. ROGERS!

EH? OH...GOOD NIGHT, MOSE...



THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, NED ROGERS HAD TO GO INTO TOWN. HE ARRIVED AT THE GENERAL STORE TO BE GREETED BY UNUSUAL EXCITEMENT...

THERE HE IS!
YEAH! ASK HIM! HE'LL KNOW!
ROGERS! IF YOU DON'T MIND, WE GOT THINGS TO TALK ABOUT!
OH? WELL... OF COURSE! ER... WHAT IS IT?!



MURDER, THAT'S WHAT! THERE'S BEEN A KILLIN'! THE SHERIFF JUST FOUND SILAS KEENE'S BODY DOWN NEAR THE CREEK! WE FIGURE YOU MIGHT KNOW SOMETHIN' ABOUT IT!

ME!? WHY... WHY, SURELY YOU DON'T THINK THAT I...



NO, WE DON'T FIGURE YOU HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT, BUT THE KILLIN' WAS DONE WITH A KNIFE! AND THE THROAT WAS CUT JUST LIKE THEY USED TO WHEN THEY SACRIFICED PEOPLE IN THAT DEVIL'S PLACE! WE AIN'T FOUND THE KNIFE, BUT WE GOT A GOOD IDEA WHO HAS IT!



OLD-TIMERS HEREABOUTS KNOW HOW THEY USED TO USE THE KNIFE! THIS WAS DONE THE SAME WAY! NOW WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MOSE!



SURE! YOU WANT THE KILLER CAUGHT, DON'T YOU? YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE OLD MOSE AN ALIBI! AND IF YOU CAN'T... WE'RE GONNA LYNCH HIM!

WHAT?! LYNCH HIM? BUT... BUT YOU'RE NOT CERTAIN...



WE'RE CERTAIN ENOUGH! WE GOT ALL THE PROOF WE NEED! WE JUST WANT TO HEAR YOU SAY THE WORD TO GLINCH IT?

YEAH! JUST SAY YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS LAST NIGHT... AND WE'LL STRING HIM UP!



BEADS OF SWEAT COVERED NED ROGERS' FOREHEAD! HIS MIND WHIRLED AND SPUN IN A FRENZY OF CONSCIENCE, DUTY, JUSTICE AND SAFETY! THEY PRESSED FORWARD EAGERLY, WAITING FOR HIS ANSWER... WAITING...

WELL, ROGERS?! YEAH! C'MON! ANSWER! OLD MOSE... OLD MOSE WAS WORKIN' RIGHT WITH ME... ALL NIGHT!



THE CROWD SUDDENLY DREW BACK. HE SAW THEIR SURPRISED, DISAPPOINTED FACES AND, OFFERING FEEBLE APOLOGIES AND EXCUSES, HE BACKED FROM THE STONE. THE AIR CLEARED HIS MUDDLED THOUGHTS SOMEWHAT AS HE LEAPED ONTO THE WAGON AND STARTED HOME...



NO, NO! MOSE *COULDN'T* HAVE DONE IT! HE... HE JUST *WOULDN'T*! BUT HE DID LOOK *GUILTY*! MAYBE... MAYBE THE TOWNSFOLK ARE RIGHT!

SURE! HE HATED PEOPLE FOR THE WAY THEY TREATED HIM! HE WANTS *REVENGE*! HE'D KILL *ANYBODY*! AND... AND *BELLE'S* ALL ALONE WITH HIM!



HIS WHIP CRACKED SHARPLY AND THE STALLION BURST FORWARD INTO A STEADY, FRANTIC GALLOP!

HE *WOULDN'T* HURT HER! HE JUST *COULDN'T*! I'D KILL HIM! HE... HE... **GIDDAP!**



BEFORE THE ROLLICKING WAGON CAME TO A FULL STOP, NED WAS ON THE PORCH, RACING INTO THE HOUSE.



HIS MIND SAW THE SIGNS OF BATTLE, AS HE RUSHED FROM ROOM TO ROOM, GROWING MORE PANICKY EACH MINUTE! SUDDENLY...



HE CROUCHED OVER HER STILL FORM, SHOCKED, FRIGHTENED AND BLAZING MAD! AND THEN HE SENSED A MOVEMENT IN THE DOORWAY! HE SAW MOSE, STANDING BREATHLESSLY THERE, A WILD LOOK IN HIS EYES! HE SAW THE LONG, DEEP FINGERNAIL SCRATCHES ON HIS FACE, THE BLOOD ON HIS HANDS...



WITH A SNARL OF MANIACAL RAGE, HE HURLED HIMSELF AT THE OLD MAN AND BORE HIM TO THE FLOOR! HIS FISTS WERE HAMMER-LIKE AS HE PUMMELED AND RIPPED, POUNDED, BLOODIED AND HACKED WITH A VENGEFUL PLEASURE...



TIME SWAM INTERMINABLY, COMPLETELY APART FROM HIS MIND'S CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT FINALLY HIS THOUGHTS NORMALIZED, AND AT ONCE HE FOUND HIMSELF ON HIS FEET, STARING... STARING AT HIS CRIMSON HANDS... AT THE MASS OF OOOZING PULP THAT WAS, A FEW MINUTES BEFORE, THE FACE OF OLD MOSE!



HE HEARD HIS WIFE MOAN. QUICKLY HE WAS BESIDE HER, CARRESSING HER FACE AND HAIR, PLEADING WITH HER TO BE ALL RIGHT. THE RAGE WAS SPENT... ITS PLACE WAS FILLED WITH A TERRIBLE SORROW, A FRIGHTENING GUILTY?



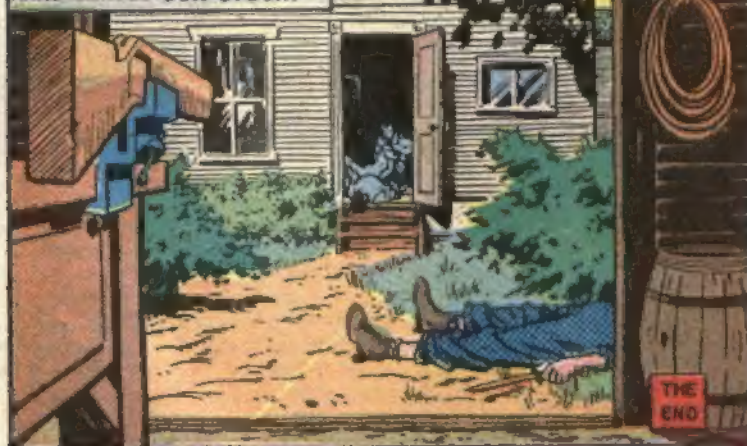
IT'S ALL MY FAULT! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN NOT TO LEAVE YOU ALONE WITH HIM! I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO WHAT THEY TOLD ME! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHEN I CAUGHT HIM SNEAKING INTO THE HOUSE LAST NIGHT... AFTER HE KILLED SILAS KEENE!



...MOSE... LAST NIGHT WAS... WORKING IN THE... WOODSHED! HE DIDN'T... KILL ANYONE! DIDN'T HURT ME... (GASP!) HE WAS TRYING... TO HELP ME! ...TRYING TO PROTECT ME... PROTECT... PRO...



HE FELT HIS WIFE'S BODY GO LIMP, WATCHED THE GREYISH-LAVENDER PALLOR SEEP INTO HER FACE AND HE KNEW SHE WAS DEAD. TEARFULLY, PERPLEXED, HE GAZED OVER THE BATTERED FORM OF OLD MOSE, OUT THROUGH THE DOOR INTO THE SUNLIGHT. ACROSS THE LAWN UNDER A BUSH HIS EYES CAUGHT THE PRISON-GREY UNIFORMED BODY... BLOOD-SMEARED... DEAD! AND IN THE CONVICT'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND HE SAW THE LONG, BLOODY KNIFE THAT HE NOW KNEW HAD KILLED SILAS KEENE! THROUGH THE OPEN WOODSHED DOORS HE SAW THE PARTLY-FINISHED, HAND-CARVED **GUN STOCK!**



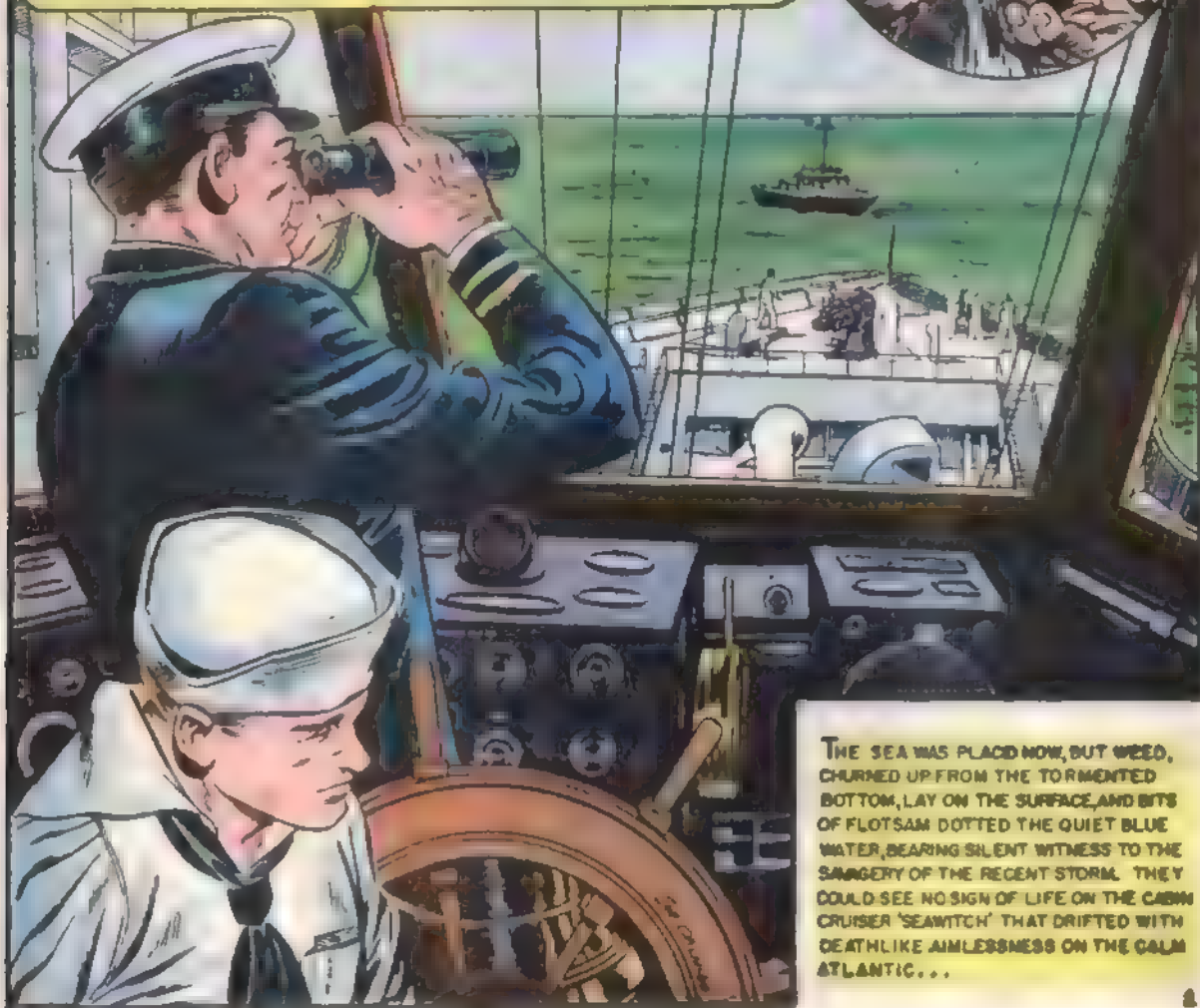
HEH, HEH! NED LOST HIS HEAD AND PUNCHED MOSE IN THE NOSE! YEP! MOSE WAS MAKING A NEW GUN STOCK FOR MR. ROGERS! HE WANTED NED TO BE SURPRISED! WELL... NED WAS SURPRISED TO FIND HE'D KILLED THE WRONG MAN! ANYWAY, WE HOPE YOU LIKED THIS TALE TAKEN FROM OUR VAULT OF HORROR STOCK-PILE! AND IF YOU WONDERED WHAT NED DID FOR A LIVING, IT'S SIMPLE! HE WAS A **STOCK-BROKER!** HEH, HEH! SEE YOU LATER, EH?



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

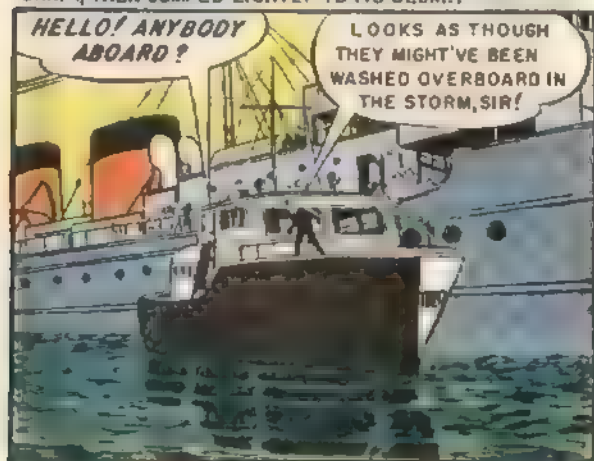
HEH HEH! SALUTATIONS, SCARE-SEEKERS! TROT RIGHT INTO THE *CRYPT OF TERROR*! ONCE AGAIN I BID YOU WELCOME TO THE MORBID MORASS OF MAY-HEM! JUST LATCH ONTO A LIMP LILLY, CROSS YOUR HANDS ON YOUR CHESTS AND LIE DOWN, WHILE YOUR CRAFTY *CRYPT-KEEPER* ATTEMPTS TO CLOY YOUR BOTTOMLESS BELLIES WITH A STORY FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH BLOODSHED! I'VE NAMED THIS NOXIOUS LITTLE NOVELETTE...

AN HARROW ESCAPE!



THE SEA WAS PLACID NOW, BUT WEED, CHURNED UP FROM THE TORMENTED BOTTOM, LAY ON THE SURFACE, AND BITS OF FLOTSAM DOTTED THE QUIET BLUE WATER, BEARING SILENT WITNESS TO THE SANGERY OF THE RECENT STORM. THEY COULD SEE NO SIGN OF LIFE ON THE CAWN CRUISER 'SEAWITCH' THAT DRIFTED WITH DEATHLIKE AIMLESSNESS ON THE CALM ATLANTIC...

CAPTAIN GRADY AND LIEUTENANT MORTON WAITED UNTIL THEIR COASTGUARD CUTTER SIDLED UP TO THE DRIFTING CRAFT, THEN JUMPED LIGHTLY TO ITS DECK...



HELLO! ANYBODY ABOARD?

LOOKS AS THOUGH THEY MIGHT'VE BEEN WASHED OVERBOARD IN THE STORM, SIR!

THE TWO OFFICERS STEPPED CONFIDENTLY INTO THE CRUISER'S CABIN, THEN STOPPED, SURPRISED AT THE SIGHT THAT GREETED THEM! THERE WAS A GIRL LYING ON ONE BUNK, AND ON ANOTHER THERE WAS THE STILL, WHITISH FIGURE OF A MAN...



WHAT TH! BLAZES, CAPTAIN! THEY'RE DEAD!

I DON'T NEED YOU TO TELL ME THAT, MORTON!

THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT MOVED CLOSER TO EXAMINE THE MOTIONLESS BODY. AS HE DID SO, THE MASK-LIKE FACE TWITCHED...



WAIT, SIR! THE MAN'S ALIVE! HE JUST OPENED HIS EYES!

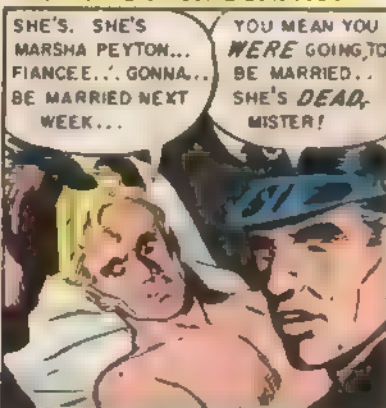
THE CAPTAIN APPROACHED THE ALL-BUT LIFELESS MAN ON THE BUNK WHO, WITH GREAT EFFORT, RAISED HIS ARM AND POINTED TO A LOCKER.



YOU'RE DYING, MISTER! WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE?

...BRANDY... I'LL GET IT, SIR!

THEY PROPPED HIM UP IN THE BUNK AND REVIVED HIM SOMEWHAT WITH THE BRANDY. HIS GLAZED EYES SOUGHT TO FOCUS ON THE GIRL'S BODY IN THE OPPOSITE BUNK...



SHE'S. SHE'S MARSHA PEYTON... FIANCEE... GONNA... BE MARRIED NEXT WEEK...

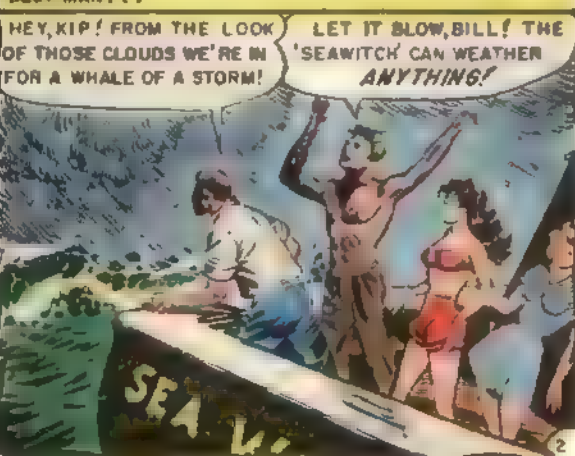
YOU MEAN YOU WERE GOING TO BE MARRIED... SHE'S DEAD, MISTER!

THE MAN SIGHED HEAVILY, TOOK A DEEP BREATH. HE SEEMED TO HAVE GAINED SOME STRENGTH...



MY NAME IS FOWLER... KIP FOWLER. WHERE...? OH...YES. MARSHA... Y-YOU'D BETTER LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT IT. FROM THE BEGINNING...

"MARSHA, AND BILL AND LILLIAN THOMAS JOINED ME ON THIS CRUISE YESTERDAY MORNING. BILL WAS TO BE MY BEST MAN..."

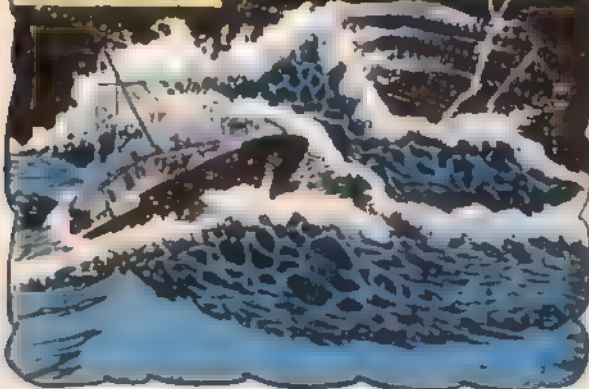


HEY, KIP! FROM THE LOOK OF THOSE CLOUDS WE'RE IN FOR A WHALE OF A STORM!

LET IT BLOW, BILL! THE 'SEAWITCH' CAN WEATHER ANYTHING!

SEA L...

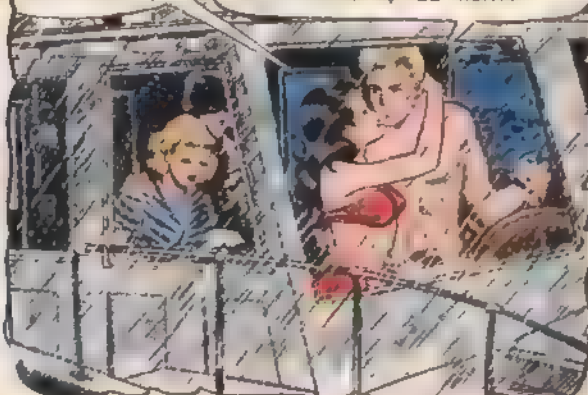
"THE STORM WAS SOON ON US! I HAD CHALLENGED THE ELEMENTS AND WE HAD THE WORKS THROWN AT US! GREAT JAGGED FORKS OF LIGHTNING RIPPED THE BLACKNESS... SHATTERING THUNDER BLASTED OUR EARDRUMS! THE SEA HEAVED AND ROLLED AND TOSSED US ABOUT LIKE A BOBBING CORK..."



"IT WAS MORE THAN I HAD BARGAINED FOR MARSHA TREMBLED IN MY ARMS, NOT KNOWING I WAS AS FRIGHTENED AS SHE..."

OH, KIP, CAN'T WE MAKE PORT?

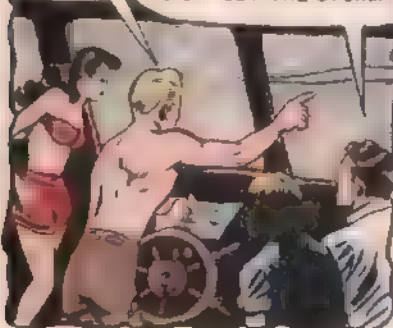
SURE, HONEY, SURE! DON'T WORRY... WE'LL MAKE IT, ALL RIGHT!



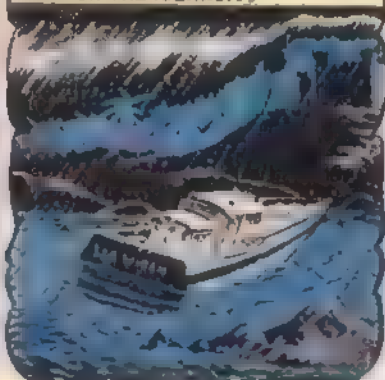
"THERE WAS NO LET-UP IN THE STORM. THE GREATER PART OF THE AFTERNOON WENT BY BEFORE WE NOTICED THE SHAPES OF LAND FORMATIONS BEFORE US..."

MUST BE AN ISLAND!

BETTER HEAD FOR IT! AT LEAST WE'LL BE ABLE TO SIT-OUT THE STORM!



"THE VIOLENT WAVES CARRIED US BY A NATURAL BREAKWATER OF REEFS AND INTO A CIRCLE OF CALM. THROUGH THE OVERCAST WE SAW A GLOOMY OLD CASTLE PERCHED HIGH ON THE ISLAND..."



"I CUT THE ENGINES. THE 'SEAWITCH' DRIFTED INTO A QUIET COVE WHERE WE DROPPED ANCHOR AND WENT ASHORE. IT WAS THEN WE HEARD A HIGH-PITCHED WAILING SOUND..."

THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS! AND THAT SOUND...

...WEIRDEST SOUND I EVER HEARD! LET'S SEE IF ANYONE'S AT HOME IN THAT CASTLE!



"THE EERIE SOUND GREW TO AN EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEK AS WE NEARED THE CASTLE. HUGE BLACK BATS ROSE AS A CLOUD FROM EVERYWHERE, FILLING THE AIR WITH THEIR CRIES..."

BATS! THAT'S WHERE THAT NOISE IS COMING FROM!

HEAVENS! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

WE'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH INSIDE!



"WE PUSHED OPEN A HEAVY OAK DOOR AND DASHED INTO THE CASTLE. WHEN OUR EYES BECAME ACCUSTOMED TO THE DARKNESS WE SAW A BENT, WITHERED OLD MAN COMING TOWARD US. HE SPOKE, AND HIS WORDS ECHOED HOLLOWLY IN THE ENORMOUS HALL..."

AH, VISITORS! WELCOME TO HARROW ISLAND!

PLEASE FORGIVE US FOR BARGING IN... THERE WERE SO MANY BATS OUTSIDE...



YOU NEEDN'T FEAR MY LITTLE PETS! I SEE YOU ARE COLD AND PROBABLY HUNGRY! WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME FOOD?

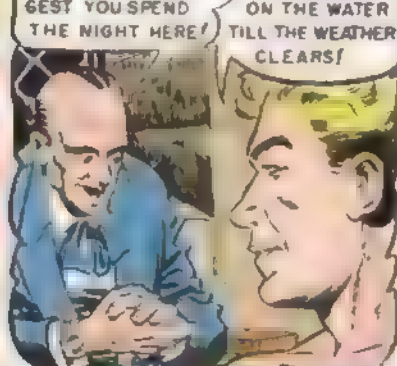
THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, SIR! I'D ALSO LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS PLACE ... I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE

"HIS ONLY REPLY WAS A CACKLING LAUGH THAT SENT CHILLS THROUGH ME! WE FOLLOWED HIM TO A HUGE DINING HALL WHERE HE SERVED US AN EXCELLENT MEAL. BUT HE DID NOT EAT. HE SAT STUDYING EACH OF US WITH HIS BEADY, GLITTERING EYES..."

"AT LENGTH HE TOOK OUT HIS WATCH, GRINNED EVILY AND LOOKED AT US..."

IT IS PAST SUN-DOWN, AND THERE SEEMS TO BE NO LET-UP IN THE STORM. I SUGGEST YOU SPEND THE NIGHT HERE!

THANK YOU, MR. HARROW! NOTHING COULD GET ME BACK ON THE WATER TILL THE WEATHER CLEARS!



"SOMETIME LATER OUR HOST LED US UP A WINDING STONE STAIRWAY TO OUR ROOMS. THE AMBERGLOW FROM HIS LANTERN FLICKERED WEAKLY ON THE WALLS, AND MARSHA CLUNG TO ME."

KIP I I DON'T LIKE THIS! I'M AFRAID! I DON'T KNOW WHY.

YOU'RE JUST TIRED AND NERVOUS, HONEY! WE'LL GO TO SLEEP NOW AND GET AN EARLY START IN THE MORNING.

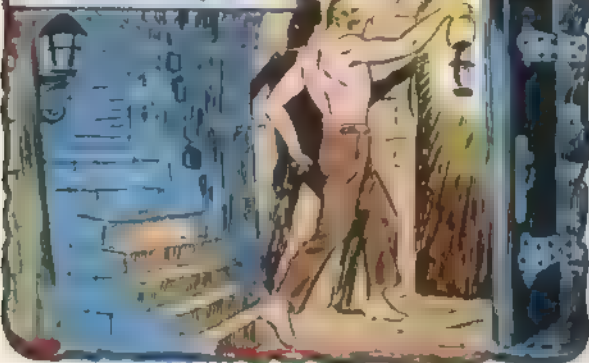


"ONCE IN MY ROOM I FELL ASLEEP QUICKLY. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I SLEPT BUT I SUDDENLY WOKE HEARING TERRIFYING CRIES! TWO VOICES... THE HOARSE YELL OF A MAN, THE SHRILL SCREAM OF A WOMAN..."

WHAT TH...? THAT'S BILL'S VOICE! AND LILLIAN'S!



"HURRIEDLY I DRESSED, LIGHTED THE LANTERN ON MY BUREAU, AND FOLLOWED THE SCREAMS DOWNSTAIRS. THEY LED ME TO A RUSTED STEEL DOOR JUST OFF THE ENTRANCE HALL. IT'S ANCIENT HINGES RASPED DEFTLY AS I PULLED IT OPEN AND STARED INTO THE DIMLY-LIT CELLAR BELOW. MY ENTIRE BEING WENT NUMB WITH HORROR."

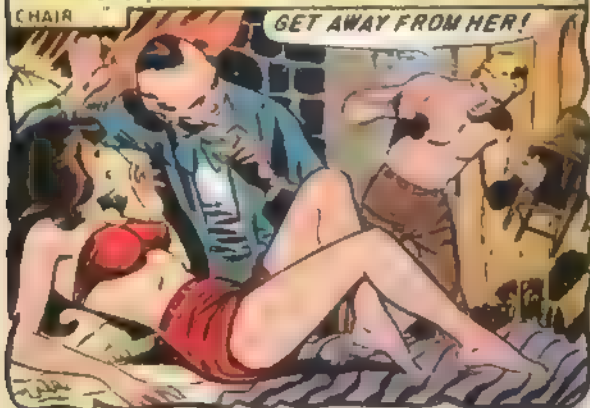


"I COULD SEE SEVERAL OPEN EARTH-FILLED COFFINS! BILL AND LILLIAN, NOW SILENT, LAY STILL AND WHITE ON THE STONE FLOOR, WHILE A SINISTER GROUP CLUSTERED ABOUT THEM, DRAINING THEIR LIFE BLOOD! VAMPIRES!..."

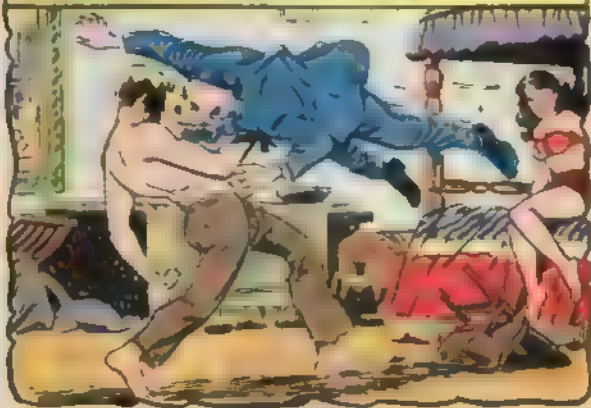


I THOUGHT ONLY OF MARSHA'S SAFETY AND MY OWN! I RACED UP TO HER ROOM, BURST THROUGH THE DOOR! HARROW WAS THERE BENDING OVER MARSHA, HIS LONG VAMPIRE FANGS NEAR HER PULSING THROAT! SHE SHRANK BACK, LIVID WITH FRIGHT! I SNATCHED UP A CHAIR

GET AWAY FROM HER!



"HARROW WHIRLED WITH A STARTLED SQUEAL! I SMASHED THE WOODEN CHAIR AGAINST A WALL, PICKED UP A LENGTH OF ITS SPLINTERED LEG... A **STAKE!** AS THE AGED VAMPIRE CAME LUNGING TOWARD ME, I DROVE THE WOODEN STAKE DEEP INTO HIS HEART



"TOGETHER WE RAN FRANTICALLY TO THE BOAT! SEVERAL BLOODTHIRSTY VAMPIRES REACHED THE WATER'S EDGE SECONDS AFTER I STARTED THE ENGINES AND MADE TOWARD THE COVE ENTRANCE..."

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DARLING... WE'RE SAFE NOW!



MARSHA, I'M SORRY ABOUT BILL AND LILLIAN! I WAS TOO LATE TO HELP THEM! THEY'D ALREADY BEEN BITTEN! THAT... THAT MEANS THEY WERE INFECTED... (CHOKES) THEY'RE **VAMPIRES** NOW.

I KNOW KIP...



"I TURNED INSTINCTIVELY, THEN RECOILED AS MARSHA CAME TOWARD ME WITH LONG DROOLING FANGS BARED... HER FLESH ASHEN, BLOOD-LESS..."

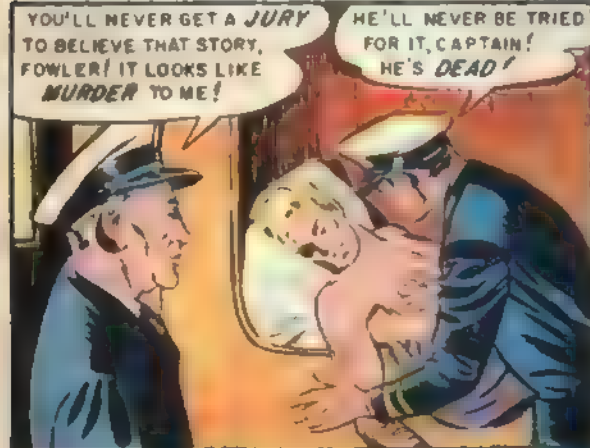
MARSHA! YOU! A **VAMPIRE!** HARROW... HE GOT TO YOU BEFORE I KILLED HIM!



KIP FOWLER SANK BACK, WHISPERED A FEW MORE WORDS, THEN LAY STILL AND WHITE. CAPTAIN GRADY LOOKED DOWN AT MARSHA PEYTON'S BODY...

YOU'LL NEVER GET A **JURY** TO BELIEVE THAT STORY, FOWLER! IT LOOKS LIKE **MURDER** TO ME!

HE'LL NEVER BE TRIED FOR IT, CAPTAIN! HE'S **DEAD!**



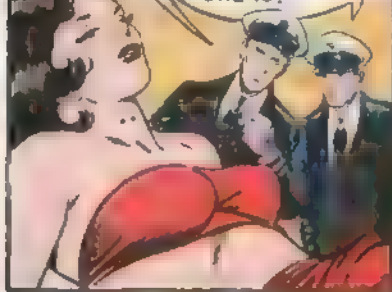
THE CAPTAIN'S FACE HARDENED, THEIR HEAVY BREATHING IN THE SUDDEN DEATHLY SILENCE SOUNDED IN RHYTHM TOO THE LAPPING OF THE WATER AGAINST THE BOAT, THROWING OFF A SHUDDER, LIEUTENANT MORTON SPOKE NERVOUSLY...

CAPTAIN GRADY... WHAT IF HE WAS TELLING THE **TRUTH**? YOU SEE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE... SO PALE COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD!

YOU MEAN BY THIS GIRL? **POPPYCOCK**, MORTON! SHE'S DEAD! FEEL HER FACE... COLD AS **ICE!**



BUT LOOK AT HER **THROAT**, CAPTAIN! TWO PUNCTURE MARKS... JUST LIKE HE SAID! HE MUST HAVE PUT THEM THERE WITH A **NAIL** OR SOMETHING **AFTER** SHE DIED! BUT IF YOU BELIEVED HIM, MORTON, GO WHITTLE A **STAKE**! YOU CAN'T KILL HER ANY DEADDER THAN SHE IS!



THE LIEUTENANT QUICKLY FASHIONED A STAKE FROM A DECK CHAIR. HE KNEELED BY THE GIRL, CLUTCHING THE STAKE IN HIS HAND... POISED ABOVE HER HEART...

I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE SERIOUS, LIEUTENANT! COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. IT'S **LATE**... AND THERE'S A FOG ROLLING IN!



THE HARD-BITTEN CAPTAIN BLANCHED AS MORTON PLUNGED THE STAKE VICIOUSLY INTO MARSHA'S HEART! IMMEDIATELY, HER FLESH WITHERED, TURNED A GREYISH-GREEN, TOOK ON THE LOOK OF A LONG DEAD MUMMY THERE WAS A SUDDEN STENCH OF DECOMPOSITION...



GRIMLY, OBVIOUSLY UNNERVED, THE TWO OFFICERS STARTED TO GO ABOVE DECK. A PALE YELLOW MOON GLIMMERED WARILY IN THE HEAVY NIGHT MIST...

DON'T YOU SEE, CAPTAIN? A VAMPIRE NEEDS **BLOOD** TO STAY ALIVE! SHE MUST HAVE BEEN GETTING IT FROM **HIM**! THAT'S WHY.

HOLD IT, MORTON! REMEMBER, FOWLER SAID A **VAMPIRE'S BITE** WAS... WAS **INFECTIOUS**!



THAT'S RIGHT, SIR! BUT SO WHAT? SHE'S DEAD NOW...

I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT **HER**! FOR PETE'S SAKE, DON'T YOU SEE? IF SHE BIT **HIM**, THEN **HE'S**...



BOTH MEN WHIRLED IN TERRIFIED REALIZATION, BUT **TOO LATE**! KIP FOWLER WAS ON THEM, HIS GLISTENING FANGS SNAPPING EAGERLY, SPITTLE RUNNING FROM HIS LIPS...



HEH, HEH! OH, BUT THAT KIP WAS A SHREWD ONE! HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE **MARRIED** ANYWAY! IF ANY OF YOU GIRLS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A COUPLE OF RATHER **PALE COASTGUARDSMEN**, JUST SEND ME THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD WITH YOUR **BLOOD TYPE** SPECIFIED AND WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST! HEH! ANYHOO... HAH, THIS IS YOUR LOVING LI'L **CRYPT-KEEPER** REMINDING YOU THAT I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE SECOND ISSUE OF MY **NEW MAG, THE CRYPT OF TERROR**! **BYE!**



THE END...

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

THIS IS AN APPEAL FOR ACTION!

THE PROBLEM: Comics are under fire . . . horror and crime comics in particular. Due to the efforts of various "do-gooders" and "do-gooder" groups, a large segment of the public is being led to believe that certain comic magazines cause juvenile delinquency, warp the minds of America's youth, and affect the development of the personalities of those who read them! Among these "do-gooders" are a psychiatrist who has made a lucrative career of attacking comic magazines, certain publishing companies who do not publish comics and who would benefit by their demise, many groups of adults who would like to blame their lack of ability as responsible parents on comic mags instead of on themselves, and various assorted headline hunters. These people are militant. They complain to local police officials, to local magazine retailers, to local wholesalers, and to their congressmen. They complain and complain and threaten and threaten. Eventually, everyone gets frightened. The newsdealer gets frightened. He removes the books from display. The wholesaler gets frightened. He refuses shipments. The congressmen get frightened . . . November is coming! They start an investigation. This wave of hysteria has seriously threatened the very existence of the whole comic magazine industry.

WE BELIEVE: Your editors sincerely believe that the claim of these crusaders . . . that comics are bad for children . . . is *nonsense*. If we, in the slightest way, thought that horror comics, crime comics, or any other kind of comics were harmful to our readers, we would cease publishing them and direct our efforts toward something else!

And we're not alone in our belief. For example Dr. David Abrahamsen, eminent criminologist, in his book, "Who Are The Guilty?" says, "Comic books do not lead to crime, although they have been widely blamed for it . . . In my experience as a psychiatrist, I cannot remember having seen one boy or girl who has committed a crime, or who became neurotic or psychotic . . . because he or she read comic books." A group led by Dr. Freda Kehm, Mental Health Chairman of the Ill. Congress of the P. T. A., decided that living room violence has "a decided beneficial effect on young minds." Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that horror comic books do not originate criminal behavior in children . . . in a way, the horror comics may, do some good . . . children may use fantasy, as stimulated by the "comics" as a means of working out natural feelings of aggressiveness.

We also believe that a large portion of our total readership of horror and crime comics is made up of adults. We believe that those who oppose comics are a small minority. Yet this minority is causing the hysteria. The voice of the *majority* . . . you who buy comics, read them, enjoy them, and are not harmed by them . . . has not been heard!

WHAT YOU MUST DO: Unless you act now, the pressure from this minority may force comics from the American scene. It is members of this minority who threaten the local retailers, who threaten the local wholesalers, who have sent letters to the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency (now investigating the comic industry).

IT IS TIME THAT THE MAJORITY'S VOICE BE HEARD!

It is time that the Senate Subcommittee hears from **YOU** . . . *each and every one of you!*

If you agree that comics are harmless entertainment, write a letter or a postcard **TODAY** to

The Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

and in your own words, tell them so. Make it a nice, polite letter! In the case of you younger readers, it would be more effective if you could get your parents to write for you, or perhaps add a P.S. to your letter, as the Senate Subcommittee may not have much respect for the opinions of minors.

Of course, if you or your parents *disagree* with us, and believe that comics **ARE** bad, let your sentiments be known on that too! The important thing is that the Subcommittee hear from actual comic book readers and/or their parents, rather than from people who never read a comic magazine in their lives, but simply want to destroy them.

It is also important that your local newsdealer be encouraged to continue carrying, displaying, and selling *all kinds* of comics. Speak to him. Have him speak to his wholesaler.

Wherever you can, let your voice and the voices of your parents be raised in protest over the campaign against comics.

But first . . . *right now* . . . please write that letter to the Senate Subcommittee.

Sincerely,
Your grateful editors
(for the whole E. C. Gang)

SENSATIONAL OFFER OF HARD-TO-GET STAMPS!

ALL-DIFFERENT

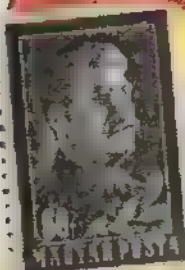
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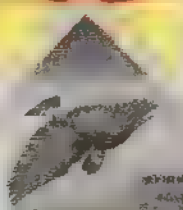
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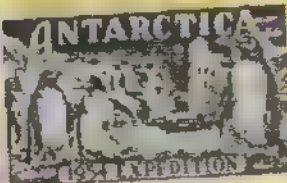


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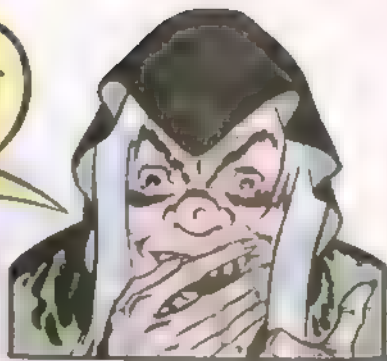
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ZENITH CO. 81 Willoughby St., Brooklyn 1, N. Y.

HEH! YOU'LL ENJOY *THIS* ONE! BLOOD FLOWS
LIKE A TORRENT IN THIS GRUESOME TALE ABOUT

THE PIT!



THERE WAS A RAW CHILL IN THE NIGHT AIR, BUT THE FIGHT FANS' BLOOD BOILED IN THEIR WILD-EYED EXCITEMENT. THEY STOOD ENCIRCLING THE GORE-SPLATTERED PIT, SCREAMING AS FRENZIED COCK SANK KNIFE-SHARP SPUR INTO SNARL OPPONENT...

UNMINDFUL OF THE SHRIEKING OF THE BLOODTHIRSTY FIGHT FANS, UNDER THE GLARING FLOODLIGHTS THE CONTESTANTS PECKED AND GASHED UNTIL ONE TORN COCK LAY DEAD AND THE VICTOR CROWED LUSTILY WITH TRIUMPH.



NOT FAR AWAY THERE WAS ANOTHER PIT, AND IN IT, GOADED BY THE SHRILL SHRIEKS OF A FRENZIED AUDIENCE, TWO VICIOUS DOGS CIRCLED BENEATH BRIGHT SPOTLIGHTS, SNARLING AND SNAPPING.



SWIFTLY THE STRONGER DOG SANK HIS FOAM-WET FANGS INTO THE OTHER'S THROAT, RIPPED IT OUT, AND THEN STOOD PANTING, SHIFFING AT HIS RIVAL'S QUIVERING CORPSE...



NEARBY, FELIX JOHNSON PUCKERED HIS TROUBLED BROW, SYMPATHETICALLY SMOOTHING THE FEATHERS OF TWO OTHER PLUMP BIRDS. HIS WIFE, LILA, REGARDED HIM WITH SCORN...



...AND THE BLACK NIGHT WAS SHATTERED WITH RAUCOUS CHEERS AS ONE BEAST LUNGED, RIPPED RED FLESH AND BLOOD-MATTED FUR FROM HIS DYING FOE.



AARON SCOTT AND HIS WIFE BEATRICE HEADED FOR THE GORY PIT WITH TWO MORE FERCE, MUZZLED FIGHTERS.



THE TWO NEW DOGS WERE RELEASED INTO THE PIT. AMID THE RENEWED BURSTS OF FRANTIC GLEE, AARON AND BEATRICE RETURNED TO THE CAGES, COUNTINUING THE ARGUMENT THAT HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR MONTHS NOW...

YOU LOVE **DOGS!** I LOVE **MONEY!** BUT YOU'RE TOO **DUMB** TO EARN A LIVIN' ANY OTHER WAY! THE DOGFIGHTS ARE OUR BREAD AND BUTTER!

I WAS MAKIN' **FORTY-FIVE** A WEEK AT THE SERVICE STATION IN TOWN...



YOU CALL **THAT** A LIVIN'? LISTEN, IF WE QUIT, ALL OUR BUSINESS GOES TO THE JOHNSONS! YOU THINK I COULD STAND HAVIN' THAT WITCH LORD IT OVER ME? YOU KNOW SHE JUST HAD HER WHOLE DUMP DONE OVER? CAN WE AFFORD **THAT**?

NO, WE CAN'T, 'CAUSE I JUST SPENT THREE MONTHS' WORTH OF SAVINGS ON A NEW REFRIGERATOR!



AND AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE JOHNSON'S ARENA...

A NEW REFRIGERATOR! BEATRICE SCOTT WOULDN'T HAVE BOUGHT IT IF I HADN'T A-BEEN IN THE STORE JUST THEN! AND YOU TALK ABOUT GIVIN' UP THE COCK-FIGHTS! HMPF! OVER MY **DEAD** BODY, YOU WILL!

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL GET YOU A NEW REFRIGERATOR, ONLY QUIT HOUNDIN' ME!



IN THE NEXT FEW NIGHTS, BUSINESS GOT SLOWER AND SLOWER AT THE JOHNSON PITS. AT LAST, ONLY A HANDFUL OF SPECTATORS STRAGGLED IN TO SEE THE BLOOD-LETTING...

I TELL YOU IT'S JUST THE WEATHER, LILA! IT'S TOO **COLD!**

DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, FELIX! GET OVER TO THE SCOTT'S AND SEE IF **THEY'RE** DRAWIN' ANY CROWDS!



FELIX WALKED THE QUARTER-MILE TO THE SCOTT'S WHERE THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS CROWD TO SEE THE CARNAGE. HE MET AARON NEAR THE DOGPITS. THERE WAS NO ANIMOSITY BETWEEN THEM...

I DON'T MEAN T' SNOOR AARON, BUT LILA MADE ME COME! HOW'D YOU DRAW IN SUCH A BIG CROWD?

BEA SPREAD THE WORD AROUND TOWN TODAY THAT WE'D BE USIN' **FOUR DOGS** AT A TIME TONIGHT!



FOUR DOGS! I HATE FOR LILA TO FIND THAT OUT, BUT I'LL HAVE TO TELL HER!

YEAH. I KNOW JUST WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST! I JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT IT MYSELF, AN HOUR AGO... BUT THEN IT WAS TOO LATE!



DEJECTED, FELIX RETURNED HOME...

SO **THAT'S** HOW IT IS, EH? BEA SCOTT PULLED A FAST ONE! OKAY... SHE THREW FOUR DOGS IN THE PIT? TOMORROW WE PUT IN **SIX COCKS** AT ONCE... AND ATTACH **BLADES!**

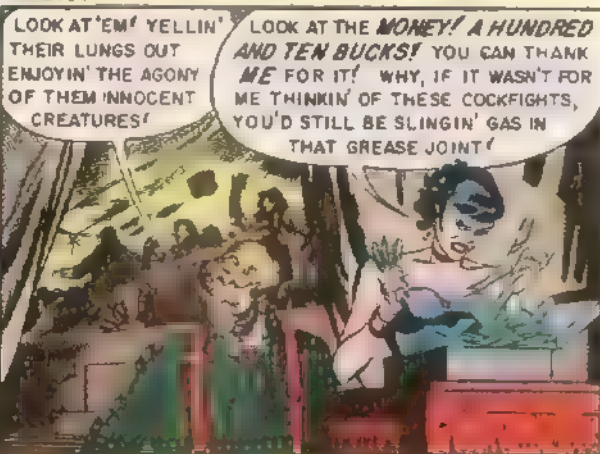
BLADES! LILA! THOSE BIRDS' LL BE TORN TO **SHREDS!**



WHEN THE WORD GOT ABOUT TOWN, THE SPORTING FOLK CAME IN DROVES, AND THEY GOT THEIR MONEY'S WORTH, TOO! SIX GAMECOCKS, WITH LONG, RAZOR-SHARP BLADES CLAMPED ABOVE THEIR NATURAL SPURS, CUT ONE ANOTHER TO RIBBONS IN A MAD FLURRY OF BLOOD AND FEATHERS...



FELIX STOOD BACK WITH LILA, WHO GRINNED AND GREEDILY COUNTED THE MONEY GAINED THROUGH THE ADMISSION GATE...



AT LEAST I WOULDN'T BE FEELIN' RATTY INSIDE... SO ASHAMED OF MYSELF!

YOU TRY GIVIN' UP, AND I'LL MAKE YOU FEEL *MORE* THAN RATTY! I'M GOIN' TO GET AHEAD OF BEA SCOTT... AND I'M GOIN' TO *STAY* AHEAD!

THE FOLLOWING DAY, BOTH WOMEN ACCIDENTALLY MET AT BALDWIN'S DRESS SHOP. THEY GLARED, BUT DIDN'T SPEAK...



IT'S THE LATEST FROM PARIS, MRS. SCOTT! SIXTY DOLLARS IS LITTLE ENOUGH TO PAY FOR A DRESS LIKE THIS!

I'LL TAKE IT, JUST CHARGE IT TO MY ACCOUNT!

NO SOONER HAD BEATRICE LEFT THAN A SLY, SPITEFUL SMILE SPREAD ACROSS LILA JOHNSON'S FACE...



I WANT THE EXACT SAME DRESS YOU JUST SOLD THAT WOMAN!

THE *SAME*? WHY, YES MA'AM... OF COURSE!

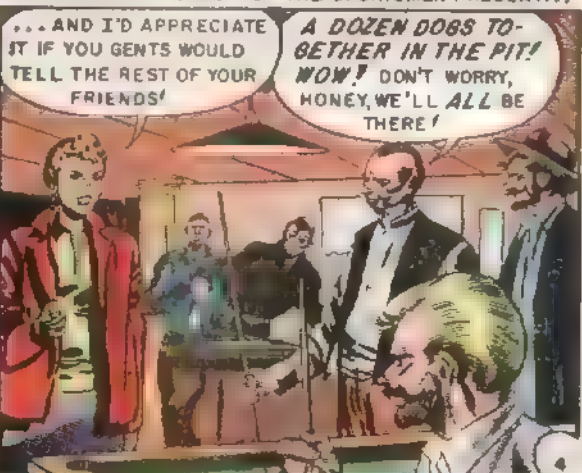
THE SHOP-GIRL WADED THROUGH THE RACKS AND PICKED OUT THE IDENTICAL DRESS, TRIUMPHANTLY, LILA COUNTED THE SIXTY DOLLARS...



IT'S STRANGE TO FIND A WOMAN WHO *LIKES* TO WEAR THE SAME DRESS *ANOTHER* WOMAN HAS!

THIS IS A *SPECIAL* DRESS, DEARIE... FOR A *SPECIAL* OCCASION!

MEANWHILE, BEA SCOTT WAS IN THE LOCAL POOL HALL, TALKING WITH A GROUP OF THE SPORTSMEN PRESENT...



... AND I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU GENTS WOULD TELL THE REST OF YOUR FRIENDS!

A *DOZEN* DOGS TO-GETHER IN THE PIT! *WOW!* DON'T WORRY, MONEY, WE'LL ALL BE THERE!

THAT NIGHT THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH AN INSANE SYMPHONY OF SCREECHING HUMANS, AND HOWLING, GROWLING BRUTES. HOT FLESH LITTERED THE SCARLET-SOAKED PIT. BEA SCOTT LISTENED TO THE VILE UPROAR WITH JOY IN HER HEART, BUT THE SOUND ONLY MADE AARON SHUDDER WITH REVULSION.



HA, HA! LET'S SEE THAT TRAMP LILA BEAT *THIS*!

I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE, BEA! WHERE WILL THIS HORRIBLE THING END? WHERE WILL IT END?!

IT'LL GET BIGGER AND BETTER, AARON! YOU'LL GET *CATS* TOMORROW! BIG *TOMCATS*! AND YOU'LL THROW THEM IN WITH THE DOGS! THEN WE'LL SEE ACTION...WILDER, BLOODIER ACTION. THAT'LL MAKE LILA JOHNSON WISH SHE'D NEVER BEEN BORN.



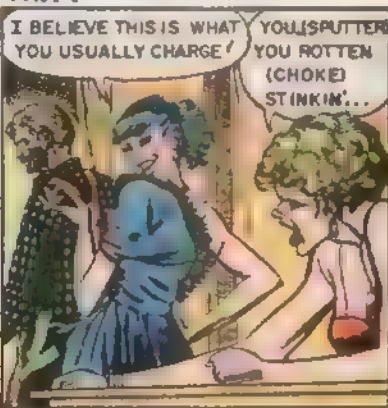
THE FIGHTS WERE NEARING AN END WHEN BEA HEARD A FAMILIAR VOICE. LILA, WEARING THE NEW DRESS, BREEZED BY HER AS THOUGH SHE WERE NOT EVEN THERE...



I'M SO GLAD YOU LIKE MY NEW FROCK, FELIX, DEAR! IT'S JUST THE THING TO WEAR TO A DOGFIGHT!

YOU? JUST A MINUTE, YOU!

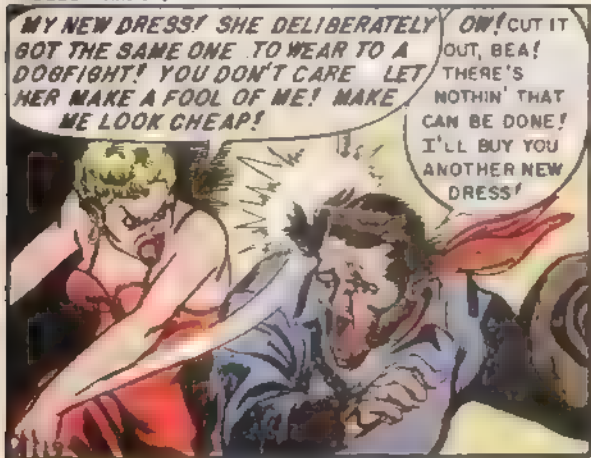
LILA STILL DIDN'T LOOK AT HER. SHE MERELY DROPPED THE ADMISSION PRICE AT BEA SCOTT'S FEET AND STROLLED BLITHELY TOWARDS THE PIT...



I BELIEVE THIS IS WHAT YOU USUALLY CHARGE!

YOU! SPUTTER YOU ROTTEN (CHOKE) STINKIN'...

BEA FLEW INTO A FRENZIED RAGE! SHE RAN TO HER HUSBAND, AND WHEN HE TRIED TO CALM HER, SHE PUMMELED HIM...



MY NEW DRESS! SHE DELIBERATELY GOT THE SAME ONE TO WEAR TO A DOGFIGHT! YOU DON'T CARE! LET HER MAKE A FOOL OF ME! MAKE ME LOOK CHEAP!

OW! CUT IT OUT, BEA! THERE'S NOTHIN' THAT CAN BE DONE! I'LL BUY YOU ANOTHER NEW DRESS!

SHE PURPLED WITH RAGE, TREMBLED VIOLENTLY, TRYING TO CLAW AT AARON'S FACE



NOTHIN' CAN BE DONE! YOU DON'T CARE, YOU STUPID, LAZY GOWARD! I'LL SHOW YOU...AND THAT SNEAK LILA, TOO!

STOP IT, BEA! STOP IT!

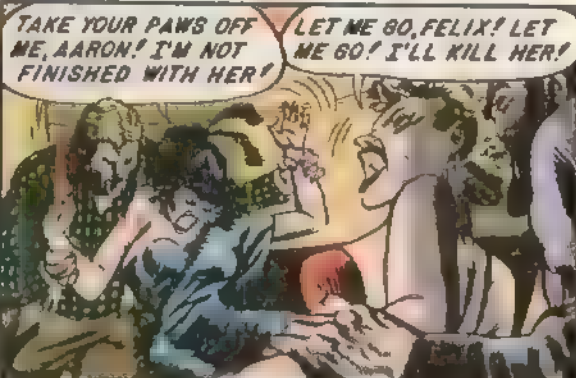
HE HELD HER BACK AS LONG AS HE COULD, BUT SHE BROKE LOOSE, LOOKING FOR HER AVOWED ENEMY. BY THEN THE FIGHTS HAD ENDED, AND LILA WAS STRAGGLING FAR BEHIND THE DEPARTING CROWD.



FELIX COULD FEEL THE QUIVERING OF HIS WIFE'S BODY, THE OMINOUS RING TO HER VOICE. BOTH SHREWS FOUGHT TO GET FREE, BUT THE HUSBANDS' EYES MET AND THERE WAS AN UNSPOKEN UNDERSTANDING AS THEY NODDED



THE SUDDENNESS OF BEA'S ATTACK DID NOT TAKE LILA BY SURPRISE! THE TWO WOMEN FLAILED AWAY AT EACH OTHER UNTIL THEIR HUSBANDS FORCIBLY PULLED THEM APART.



A MOMENT LATER, FELIX AND AARON STOOD BY THE PIT'S EDGE, THEIR ARMS ABOUT EACH OTHER'S SHOULDERS, AND THEY CHORTLED HEARTILY WITH GLEE..



...FOR IN THE PIT, STEPPING ON THE EVISGERATED CARCASSES OF A DOZEN DOGS, TWO BATTLERS CLAWED DEEP GOUGES IN EACH OTHER'S FLESH, RIPPED HAIR FROM HEADS, SANK TEETH DEEP AND TORE OUT CHUNKS OF RAW MEAT! THEY RAGED AND THRASHED VICIOUSLY TILL THEY NO LONGER RESEMBLED PERSONS UNTIL AT LAST THEY WERE NOTHING MORE THAN TWO HUMAN ANIMALS SHREDDING ONE ANOTHER IN A CONFLICT FROM WHICH THERE COULD BE NO SURVIVOR!



HEH, HEH! WELL, *DOGGONE!* THERE'S A COUPLE OF *STRIKING BEAUTIES* FOR YOU! Y'KNOW...I HEAR THAT AARON AND FELIX, THOSE *WOEBEGONE WIDOWERS*, ARE RUNNING A *HOME* FOR POVERTY-STRICKEN *PUPS* AND DECREPIT *GAME-CKOCKS!* AND NOW THAT THEY'VE NO *WIVES* TO HOUND THEM, THEY GO AROUND *CROWING* ALL DAY LONG! HEH! WELL, WHEN YOU GOTTA *CROW*, YOU GOTTA *CROW*, SO A GOODY-GOOD-BYE TO YOU FOR NOW!



E.C. WENT TO SEA IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER NEW TREND...



AND WE CAME UP WITH...
SAGAS OF THE SEA, SHIPS, PLUNDER AND...

PIRACY



**NOW YOU SEARCH
FOR IT!**

BUT IF YOU *CAN'T FIND PIRACY*
AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND, YOU
CAN *SUBSCRIBE!* JUST FILL OUT
THE COUPON AND MAIL, TOGETHER
WITH *ONE HUNDRED PIECES OF
CENT* (THAT'S ONE BUCK, LAND-
LUBBERS!), TO:

THE SEASICK EDITORS OF
PIRACY
ROOM 106
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

OKAY, BILGE RATS! YOU SHANGHAIED ME!
I ENCLOSE \$1.00 FOR THE NEXT EIGHT ISSUES
OF *PIRACY!*


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STATE ZONE NO.

BLOODSUCKERS



The gun bucked in his hand and Storch saw the old man slump to the ground in a spreading pool of blood. A sharp pain in his shoulder made Storch stagger backwards, a gasp of surprise escaping from his throat. His hand leaped to his shoulder: he winced in agony and saw the gory trickle spreading between his fingers and staining his palm.

He'd been hit by a lucky shot. He had to get out of this frontier town before they strung him up for killing Quint Barlow. While he could still move he had to get as far away as possible... hide out till nightfall, then slip across the border to safety.

Storch lunged across the dusty street, flung himself onto his mangy horse and brutally dug his spurs into the animal's flesh. In a spume of dirt the grimy buildings were left behind... Storch clattered through the outskirts of Fentonville before the alarm had even been sounded and a posse could be organized.

It would be a necktie party for sure, Storch thought grimly. Hanging on desperately with his good arm, he hunched far over the horse's shaggy mane and bit his lips to keep from crying out. They hated him here on the plains... nobody'd ever listen if he pleaded that Quint Barlow had slapped leather first. Ever since he'd slugged that Brindle boy these sodbusters had it in for him... shooting a man like Barlow meant a boathill burial for a maverick like Storch if they ever got their bloodsucking hands on him. *That's* what they were, where a ranny like Storch was involved: ferocious *bloodsuckers* out to drain the life fluid from a man who had the guts to stand up to 'em!

His strength was fading fast. The shoulder throbbed violently and spasms of nausea were welling up in his throat. He couldn't stand another minute of this hurtling over the jagged terrain; he had to rest for awhile... had to hide in the fields long enough to pry the stinging bullet from his tortured flesh.

The long swath of waving grain was just what he needed. Stumbling painfully from the animal's back, he scurried deep into the wheat field, crouching low so they couldn't spot him from the surrounding hills. With a grimace of pain, Storch sprawled headlong between the towering rows of grain. He'd be safe here till nightfall, then he'd be able to slither across the border. He'd just rest here for a moment... after he'd caught his breath he'd cut that cursed bullet from his flesh.

How long he lay in groggy sleep he never discovered. He was shocked back to wakefulness by the eerie whirring sound that filled the plains. Glancing aloft, he saw that the sun had been obscured by an undulating cloud which moved onward with relentless fury. He sat upright, his nerves tense and a fluttering of fear knotting his stomach. And then he saw what was hovering ominously overhead.

The first thick wave of locusts descended on the field before he could scramble weakly to his feet. The swarm of insects settled like a deadly pall over the stalks of grain: their slimy bodies clotted his hair and made his skin crawl in terror. He tried to shake them off... to rise and run in horror... but they enveloped him like a living, writhing shroud. He screamed in fear... but already the sound of gnawing was enveloping his consciousness. They murdered everything in their path, Storch knew as he tried to squirm free... the grain blackened with their bodies and the ground became oozy with the gorging, rapacious creatures.

Storch sank to the ground, and the locusts buried him in an instant. They slashed at his flesh as if he was a doomed stalk of wheat... a thousand stabs of agony made his body shudder. The blood poured from his pierced flesh... his skin was torn loose by cruel pincers.

Long before the cloud of bloodsuckers rose from the desolate field, in a whining, scraping crescendo, Storch's bones had been picked clean.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! SO YOU'VE FINALLY REACHED THE HAUNT OF FEAR, EH? WELL, HOP RIGHT INTO MY HUMBLE HUT, 'CAUSE I'VE REALLY GOT A HUNK OF *BUNK* BOILING FOR YOU IN THAT *CRAZY CAULDRON* OF MINE! MMMMMBOY! THAT STENCH? OH, THE *FUMIGATOR* WAS HERE... SEEMS THERE WERE SOME *FLEAS* LEFT OVER FROM *VK'S* PUTRID PIECE ABOUT THE *POOCHES*! HEE! ANYHOW, PEOPLES, THIS DELICIOUS DITTY TOOK *SIX DEGENERATIONS* OF THE *FAMOUS FRANKENSTEIN FAMILY* TO DEVELOP, SO LET'S HAVE A BIT OF QUIET WHILE I OPEN MY BIG BLACK BOOK TO THE CHAPTER ON *BLOBS* AND COMMENCE THE WRETCHED STORY, AS TOLD BY DR. EMIL FRANKENSTEIN HIMSELF, CALLED...

ASHES TO ASHES!



THIS MOSS-COVERED HEAP CLOISTERED IN WURTEMBERG'S BLACK FOREST IS MY HOME, MY LABORATORY, AS IT HAS BEEN FOR THE FRANKENSTEIN FAMILY FOR SOME ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY YEARS. TRUE, IT IS BLEAK... YES, EVEN UNPLEASANT... BUT HERE WE HAVE HAD THE UTMOST SECLUSION OUR GREAT EXPERIMENT HAS DEMANDED!

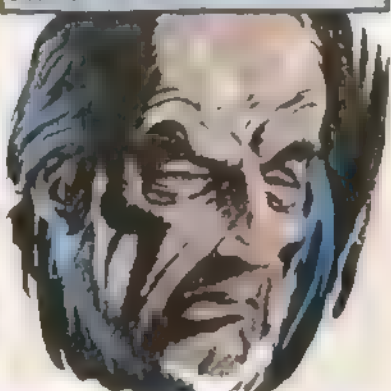
WHAT I RECORD HERE IN MY DIARY I DO WITH A HEAVY HEART, FOR IN IT LIES THE FUTILE TOIL OF SIX GENERATIONS, AND MY OWN BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT



I SUPPOSE I SHOULD START BY SAYING THAT I AM EMIL FRANKENSTEIN, THE ONLY LIVING DESCENDANT OF THAT EQUALLY UNFORTUNATE SCIENTIST WHO CREATED THE INFAMOUS MONSTER...



IT WAS HIS SON WHO, IN 1821, DESIRING TO JUSTIFY HIS FATHER'S BELIEF THAT MAN CAN CREATE MAN, EVOLVED THE THEORY THAT MANKIND DEVELOPED FROM THE LOWEST FORMS OF DECAYED MATTER



HE STARTED WITH WHAT I CAN ONLY CALL A MASS OF PUTRESCENCE DUG BY HIS OWN HANDS FROM A MIASMIC SWAMP, BLENDED WITH WASTE DREDGED FROM AN ABANDONED CESSPOOL. HERE HE BEGAN, IN THIS VERY SAME LAB, AT THE FIRST STEP OF HUMAN CREATION!



THERE WOULD BE NO GLORY FOR HIM, HE KNEW, BUT HE LABORED ARDENTLY OVER THE INCUBATION OF THE SHAPELESS, LIFELESS BLOB OF MUCK. HE WAS PAST THE AGE OF SEVENTY WHEN HE AND HIS SON FIRST NOTICED THE SLIGHTEST PULSATONS THAT SIGNIFIED ITS LIFE!



FROM THEN ON THE DEDICATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SLOWLY WRITHING GELATINOUS MASS WAS HANDED DOWN FROM PARENT TO CHILD. THROUGH THE YEARS THE HELPLESS EMBRYONIC GLOB WAS CHEMICALLY FED, KEPT WARM...



SLOWLY, EVER SO SLOWLY, EACH SUCCEEDING GENERATION WORKED WITH UNTIRING EFFORTS TO NOURISH AND CULTIVATE THE LIVING THING THAT NOW HAD EVOLVED LUNGS IN ADDITION TO ITS HEART



FILMY, JELLYISH ARMS AND LEGS HAD FORMED WHEN MY FATHER ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITY, AND IT WAS HE WHO BROUGHT ABOUT THE GREATEST DEVELOPMENT... THE CREATION HAD FORMED A HEAD AND A MOUTH!



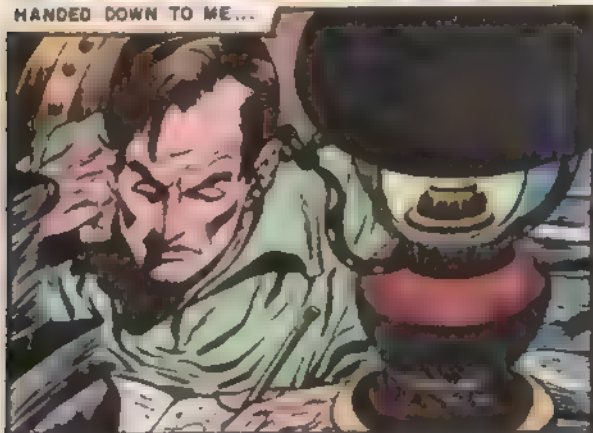
BUT THOUGH MY FATHER'S JOY WAS GREAT AND HIS HOPES HIGH, HE KNEW HE WOULD NOT LIVE TO SEE THE FINAL MATURING OF THE FAMILY'S CREATION! BUT... IN MY LIFETIME



A MONTH LATER MY FATHER DIED AND I AT ONCE TOOK UP WHERE HE LEFT OFF. WITHIN THREE YEARS THE SEMI-HUMAN CREATURE WAS TAKING CHEMICAL FOOD BY MOUTH



I FULLY REALIZED THE IMMENSE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY NOW RESTING HEAVILY ON MY SHOULDERS, AND DEEP INTO THE NIGHT I WOULD STUDY AND PORE OVER THE VOLUMINOUS NOTEBOOKS THAT HAD BEEN HANDED DOWN TO ME...



BEFORE I PASSED MY TWENTIES I REALIZED THAT THE FULL DEVELOPMENT TO A HUMAN BEING COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHIN THIRTY YEARS! I TOOK NOT EVEN TIME TO MARRY, AND SPENT ALL BUT A FEW HOURS A DAY AT MY LABORS, OR MAKING NOTES

THE NOSTRIL OPENINGS HAVE FORMED, AS HAVE THE EYE SOCKETS! X-RAYS SHOW THE INTERNAL ORGANS TO BE NORMAL AND FUNCTIONING PERFECTLY.

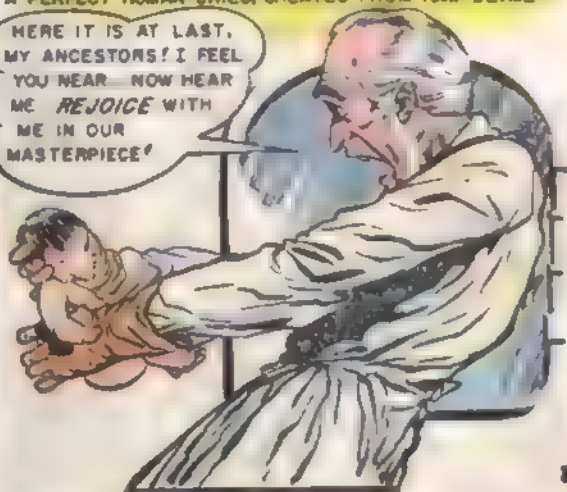


I WAS FIFTY YEARS OF AGE WHEN THAT ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT DAY CAME! I WAS AT LAST SATISFIED THAT WHAT SIX GENERATIONS HAD SACRIFICED AND STRIVED FOR WAS NOW COMPLETE! HOW WELL I RECALL THAT I WAS DRENCHED WITH SWEAT AS I REACHED INTO THE INCUBATOR...



IT CAME FORTH, BAWLING LIKE ANY NEWBORN INFANT... A PERFECT HUMAN CHILD, CREATED FROM RAW SLIME!

HERE IT IS AT LAST, MY ANCESTORS! I FEEL YOU NEAR... NOW HEAR ME REJOICE WITH ME IN OUR MASTERPIECE!



SUDDENLY A NEW PROBLEM AROSE... THE FINAL PROOF THAT THIS CHILD IS A NORMAL HUMAN LIES WITH THE FUTURE. CAN IT MARRY AND PRODUCE CHILDREN OF ITS OWN? HOW CAN I, A BACHELOR, BRING IT UP? NO, I MUST FIND A WAY

THE NEXT DAY I BROUGHT THE INFANT TO A HOSPITAL AT STUTTGART TO ASK A DOCTOR'S ADVICE, WHEN TWO NURSES UNWITTINGLY SOLVED MY DILEMMA

I EASILY LOCATED THE NURSERY AND THE DEAD INFANT. IT WAS BUT THE WORK OF A FEW MOMENTS TO SWITCH THE BABIES, TO PUT THE IDENTIFICATION BRACELET OF THE DEAD CHILD ON THE ARM OF THE LIVE FRANKENSTEIN CHILD

I CAN'T REMOVE THE BABY'S BODY FROM THE NURSERY TILL I GET DR KOEHL'S ORDERS.

THE POOR MOTHER 'SHE WANTED THAT CHILD SO BADLY



I JOTTED DOWN THE CHILD'S NEW NAME, WRAPPED THE DEAD INFANT IN A BLANKET AND LEFT THE HOSPITAL. I BURIED THE CHILD AS DECENTLY AS POSSIBLE, THEN RETURNED HOME. THAT NIGHT, I ADDED ONE MORE NOTE TO THE TIME-YELLOWED PAGES OF MY OLD NOTEBOOK.

I CLOSED THE BLACK FOREST HOUSE AND MOVED TO THE CITY OF STUTTGART, THE BETTER TO OBSERVE THE GROWTH OF MY ANCESTOR'S DREAM CREATURE. FOR TWENTY YEARS I SECRETLY WATCHED, EAVESDROPPED, SPED. NOT LONG AGO



AND SO I WRITE ITS NAME HERE, AND ASK THAT IT BE KEPT SECRET FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM THIS DATE

I DID NOT FOLLOW YOU HERE, RIKER! FOR ME YOU DO NOT EXIST, EXCEPT WHEN YOU ANNOY MY FIANCEE!

YOUR FIANCEE? THEN LOUISA HAS ACCEPTED YOU!



NO NOT YET! BUT SHE WILL, TONIGHT! YOU'RE A FOOL, RIKER! YOU ARE RICH. BUT YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO MARRY INTO THE VON KOENING FAMILY WITH YOUR BACKGROUND!

PFAH! I HARDLY THINK LOUISA IS QUITE THE SNOB THAT YOU ARE, HEINRICH GOEDL!

I STEPPED IN, THEN, CHUCKLING TO MYSELF, FOR ONLY I KNEW HOW IMPORTANT ONE OF THOSE YOUNG MEN WAS TO ME

PFAH! YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A DIRTY SOCIAL CLIMBER!

YOU SNOBBISH SWINE! SOMEDAY YOU'LL GET WHAT'S COMING TO YOU!

GENTLEMEN! GENTLEMEN, PLEASE! MAY I OFFER A SUGGESTION?





I COULD NOT HELP HEARING THE CAUSE OF YOUR DISPUTE... A YOUNG LADY, NO? WELL, THEN, LET HER DECIDE...

WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU TO INTERFERE?

HA! SO YOU ARE AFRAID TO FACE HER WITH ME!

AT THAT, HEINRICH YIELDED, AND UNDER THE PRETEXT OF SEEING THERE WOULD BE NO FIGHT, I WENT WITH THEM TO THE KOENING MANSION.

IF THE GIRL IS AS LOVELY AS HER HOME, THEN I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE BOTH SO EAGER TO MARRY HER...



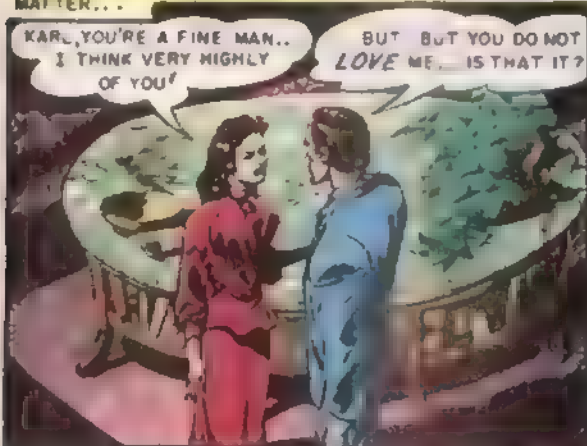
INDEED, LOUISA KOENING WAS LOVELY.

FORGIVE ME, MISS KOENING... BUT I HAVE ONLY PREVENTED BLOODSHED BETWEEN THESE TWO FRIENDS OF YOURS BY CONVINCING THEM YOU COULD SETTLE THEIR ARGUMENT!

I KNOW WHAT IT IS, SIR! I MAY AS WELL FACE IT NOW AS LATER!



I REMAINED IN THE FOYER WHILE HEINRICH AND KARL WENT WITH HER INTO THE DRAWING ROOM. I COULD HEAR THE WELL-POISED YOUNG LADY GET RIGHT TO HEART OF THE MATTER...



KARL, YOU'RE A FINE MAN... I THINK VERY HIGHLY OF YOU!

BUT BUT YOU DO NOT LOVE ME... IS THAT IT?

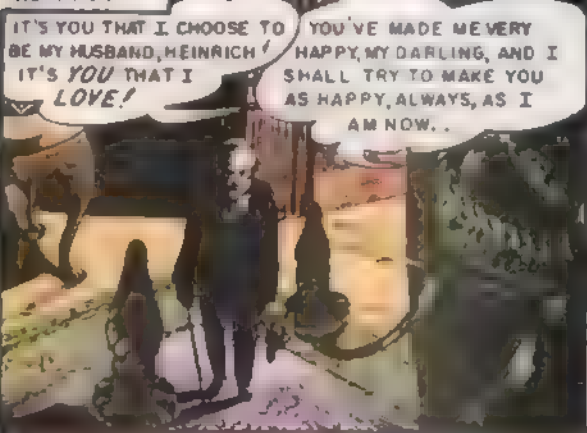
I HEARD KARL RIKER CHOKED ON THOSE WORDS. HE RUSHED BY ME, HIS FACE TAUT, BITTER AS HE DASHED FROM THE HOUSE. I CALLED TO HIM, AS DID LOUISA, BUT HE PAID NO HEED...



KARL.. YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A GOOD FRIEND!

KARL! WAIT! I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU!

THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMED VICIOUSLY BEHIND HIM. FOR A WHILE I STOOD THERE IN THE SILENCE BUT THEN I AGAIN HEARD THE VOICE OF LOUISA, NOW ADDRESSING HEINRICH



IT'S YOU THAT I CHOOSE TO BE MY HUSBAND, HEINRICH! IT'S YOU THAT I LOVE!

YOU'VE MADE ME VERY HAPPY, MY DARLING, AND I SHALL TRY TO MAKE YOU AS HAPPY, ALWAYS, AS I AM NOW..

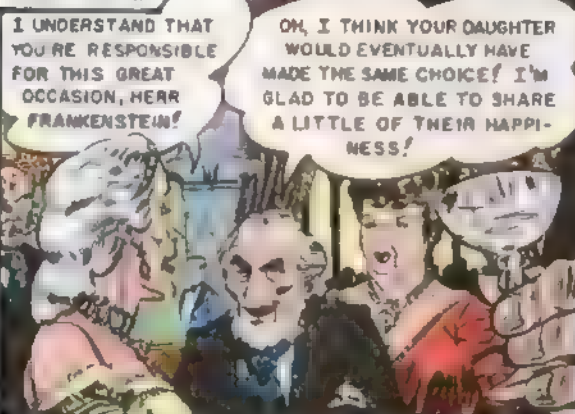
WHEN THEY RETURNED TO WHERE I STOOD IN THE FOYER, THEY WERE HOLDING HANDS. BOTH SMILED HAPPILY.

I DON'T KNOW YOU, SIR AND YET I FEEL AS THOUGH I'VE KNOWN YOU ALL MY LIFE... LIKE A GOOD FRIEND. CERTAINLY YOU HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO COME TO OUR ENGAGEMENT PARTY!

I SHALL BE MOST DELIGHTED, HEINRICH!



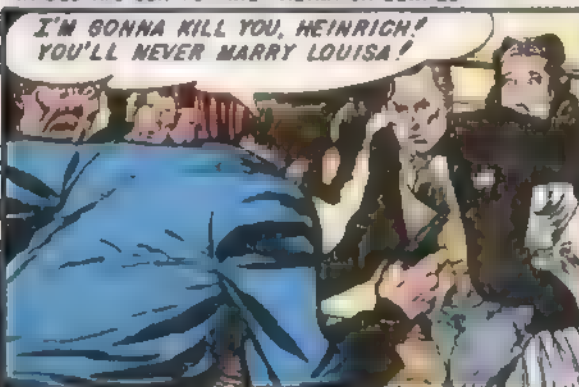
AND SO I WAS THERE THE NEXT WEEK TO HEAR THE DUO ANNOUNCE THEIR ENGAGEMENT WHEN I MET LOUISA'S ARISTOCRATIC MOTHER AND THE FAMILY'S DISTINGUISHED FRIENDS. I REALIZED KARL WOULD NOT HAVE FIT IN...



I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS GREAT OCCASION, HEAR FRANKENSTEIN!

OH, I THINK YOUR DAUGHTER WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE MADE THE SAME CHOICE! I'M GLAD TO BE ABLE TO SHARE A LITTLE OF THEIR HAPPINESS!

KARL BURST THROUGH THE THROG TO FACE HEINRICH AND LOUISA! WITH A PROFANE EXPLETIVE HE RAISED HIS GUN TO FIRE! HEINRICH LEAPED!



I'M GONNA KILL YOU, HEINRICH! YOU'LL NEVER MARRY LOUISA!

BUT THAT HAPPINESS WAS NOT TO BE LONG-LIVED. A MOMENT LATER, KARL RIKER PUSHED HIS WAY IN! HE WAS DRUNK, AND ANGRY.



BET OUTTA MY WAY! LEMME IN! WHA IT'S KARL! LOOK OUT! HE'S GOT A GUN!

THE IMPACT OF HEINRICH'S BODY JOLTED KARL, DISTURBING HIS AIM AS THE GUN BLASTED



OH!

LOUD, SHRILL SCREAMS AND HOARSE SHOUTS EMANATED FROM THE MASS OF CONFUSED, FRIGHTENED GUESTS! I SHOULDERED MY WAY THROUGH THEM TO FIND HEINRICH AND KARL BOTH STARING DUMBLY DOWN AT THE LIMP BODY OF LOUISA THAT RAPIDLY DETERIORATED INTO A GREENISH-BLACK BLOB OF VILE, STINKING DECAY! A HUNDRED, FIFTY YEARS WORK SHOT!



HEE, HEE! GOING, GOING, BUNK! THAT'S ALL LOUISA WAS... BOOEY, BOOEY BUNK! KARL WASN'T CHARGED WITH MURDER 'CAUSE NOBODY COULD PROVE THERE WAS ANY BODY! HEE! HEINRICH WOUND UP IN A NUTHOUSE, AND EMIIL FRANKENSTEIN IS IN A GRAVE NOW... ANOTHER BOOEY GLOB OF BUNK! AS FOR ME, I'VE GOT TO BE BUNK NOW, SO I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN IN MY MAG, THE HAUNT OF FEAR! TILL THEN, AWAY WE GOO!



THE END

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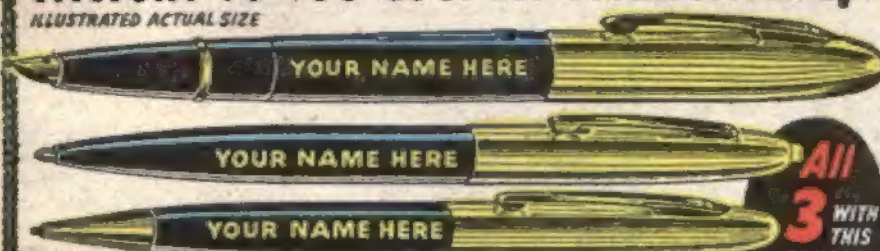
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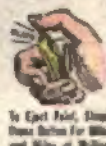
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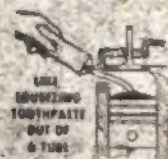
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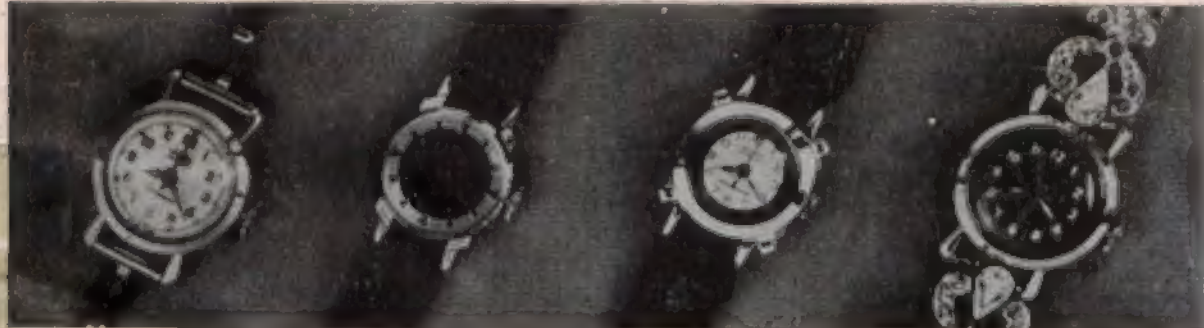
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Supremely styled Natural Gold color—with smart Metal-Flux, Natural Gold color band. Jeweled, Anti-magnetic. Vermilion-tipped Sweep second hand. This styling for formal wear, durably constructed for hard, everyday use. A truly fine man's watch!

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Pollit, part and plenty pretty! Natural Gold color—with lovely contrasting black face. Natural Gold color hands and numerals. Dainty, white-etched Black Swatch band. Jeweled, Anti-magnetic. Sweep second hand. A strikingly different watch design!

THE ARDMORE

A completely feminine timepiece in Natural Gold color, with genuine black leather band. Latest thin styling. Natural Gold color hands, numerals & Sweep second hand. Jeweled, Anti-magnetic. A charming watch that may be worn with class in daytime or evening!

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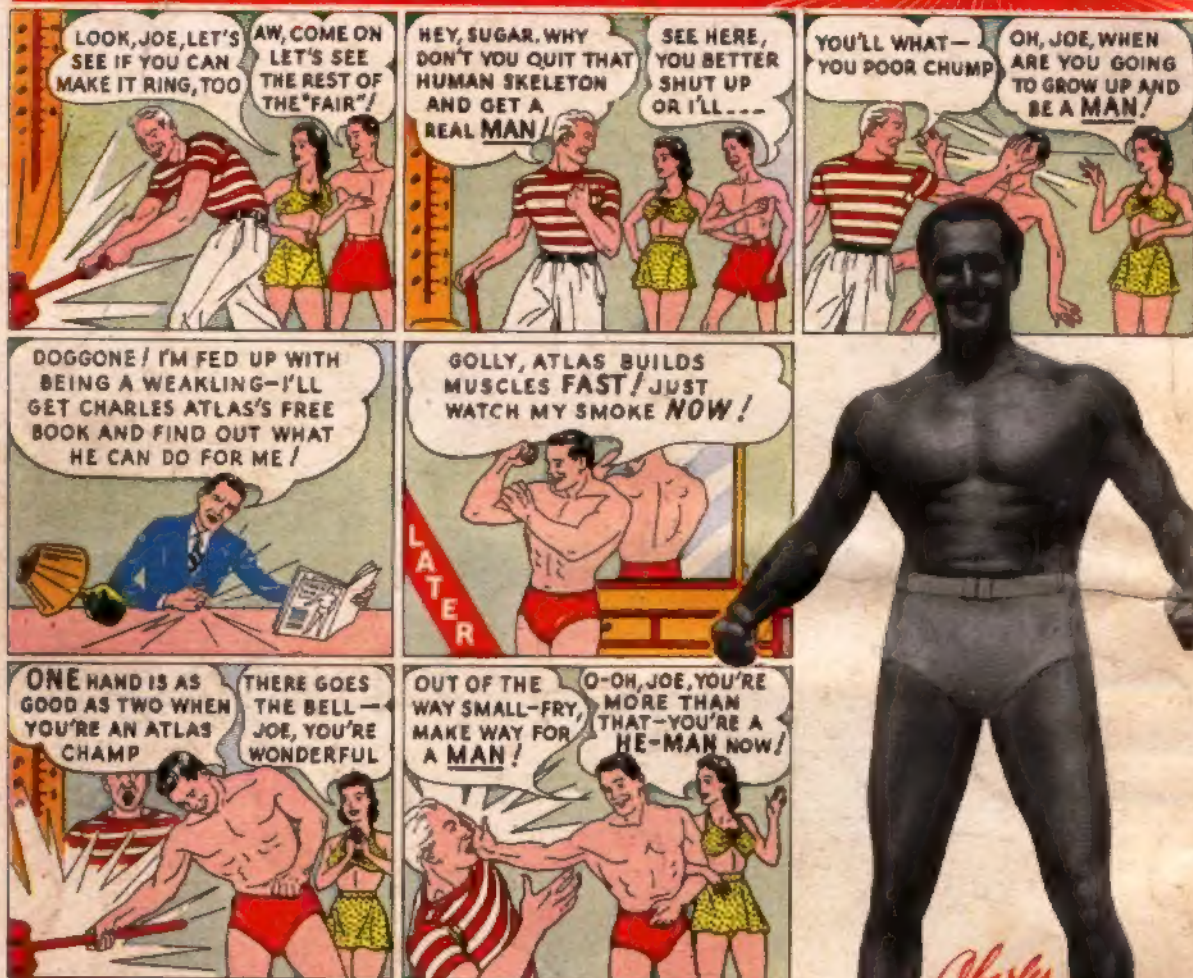
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